

**STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2022**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Council at 4:30 PM in the Annex Building Meeting Room, Knox, Indiana, with Dave Pearman, Kay Gudeman, Howard Bailey, Don Binkley, Don White present, and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Dave Pearman at 4:30 PM for the Starke County Council Regular Session.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Councilwoman Gudeman made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 15th, 2022. Councilman White seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION AREA

Councilman White made a motion to open the public hearing for the Economic Revitalization Area at 4:35 PM. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes and the public hearing was opened. Councilman Pearman advised they have the ERA before then and Attorney Schramm has been through it as well. He explained the Economic Development Agreement they are associated with the Solar Projects still fall under the category of abatement and part of the abatement process is to declare an Economic Revitalization Area. Councilman Pearman explained the possible ways that Starke County could benefit from this agreement in regards to taxes. He explained we are going the route of payment in lieu of taxes because this is money they can spend now and the entire amount comes to Starke County. He commended the Solar Companies for choosing the State of Indiana and Starke County in doing the projects here. Sometimes Starke County is thought of last and it is nice to be thought of first. Larry Wickert asked if the payment would be a onetime payment or if it would be over a period of years. Councilman Pearman advised the way it is structured is that it will be an annual basis, based on the per megawatt output of each project. If it over performs we will get extra money if it underperforms we will still get or money this will be done over 15 equal installments.

Councilman Pearman read the paragraph that pertains to the money that will be received within the agreement being “The aggregate amount of the EDA Payments shall be equal to Six Million Four Hundred Eighty Thousand and No/100 Dollars (\$6,480,000.00). The EDA Payments shall be made in (15) installments of Four Hundred Thirty-Two Thousand and No/100 Dollars (\$432,000.00), paid on an annual basis during the term from the first installment payment date as set forth herein.” Larry Wickert asked if they would receive 100% abatement on the property. Councilman Pearman advised yes it would be. Councilman Pearman talking about the Decommissioning agreement or (end of life), he stated in this scenario it is a bonded effort, he said within the first 5 years there will be an in depth study done by engineers on what that will cost. However, in the end if the area was farmland it will be reverted back to farmland. Commissioner Gourley advised that was one of his highest concerns was the Decommissioning Agreement and returning the ground back to an acceptable state. Councilman Bailey advised from his understanding there is 6000 acres involved but he wanted to know how many acres Mammoth is using. Attorney Shelmon advised that the project is approximately 6000 acres but the acreage of actual panel coverage is 2500. Councilman Binkley made a motion to close the public hearing at 4:55 PM. Councilwomen Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Councilman Binkley made a motion to approve A Confirmatory Resolution for the Establishment of an Economic Revitalization Area and The Granting of Assessed-Value Deduction for the Mammoth Solar, LLC Project by the County Council of Starke County, Indiana. Councilman White seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilwoman Gudeman made a motion to approve the Agreement for Economic Development between the Starke County Council, Starke County, Indiana, and Dunn’s Bridge Energy Storage, LLC and the Agreement for Economic Development between the Starke County Council, Starke County, Indiana, and Mammoth Solar, LLC. Councilman Binkley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Councilman Binkley made a motion to approve A Preliminary Resolution for the Establishment of an Economic Revitalization Area for the NextEra Solar Project. Councilman Bailey seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

EMS-AMBULANCE PROPOSAL

Eric Wood, Director of Starke County EMS came before the Starke County Council with Ambulance Proposal quotes. He advised he has brought itemized quotes. The full loading cot is about \$60,000 but just the cot would be between \$19,000 to \$21,000. He presented three quotes and itemized information on each quote. The Osage Ambulance quote without the cot would be \$190,715.22. The second quote is from Wheel Coach and without the cot the quote would be \$190,000 and some change. He advised the third quote is from Demers in the amount of \$260,232.00. Director Wood advised that if they agree to buy an ambulance today it would not be delivered until October or November of 2023. The only chance he may have to get one sooner is if he could get a demo unit. Councilman Pearman asked how long the quote were good for. Director Wood stated they are good until the end of this month. Councilman Pearman advised he does not think they should vote this down but they have not received a recommendation from the Board of Commissioners to make this purchase as well. Commissioner Gourley advised he would like to work today's getting a better handle on the equipment they use and a rolling out date for the equipment. Councilman Pearman agreed and that a motion to table would be needed in this case.

Councilman Pearman asked what year the oldest and newest ambulance is. Director Wood advised he had a 2009 as the oldest and a 2019 as the newest. Councilman Bailey asked what the condition of the 2009 ambulance is. Director Wood advised all trucks are running at the moment and are able to be used. The 2009 is the backup to the backup. Further discussion was held regarding which rigs and the condition of the rigs and the years of those rigs and were the new truck would be going. Commissioner Gourley stated that part of his vision for the ambulance service is to create an environment where we have both primary rig and a stand by rig at each base. Director Wood advised that the quotes he presented were for a gas rig not diesel. Councilman Binkley advised that Director Wood should keep his eyes and ears open for a demo or a used one as well. Councilman Binkley made a motion to table the ambulance purchase discussion. Councilman Bailey seconded the motion. Discussion was held with David Cole from North Central Emergency Vehicles Osage Ambulance regarding the types of ambulances that are available to purchase in today's market. The motion was approved with all ayes.

CYBERSECURITY - IT

Richard Franks, Director of IT, came before the Starke County Council to advise that he has found a cheaper option for the multi-factor implementation plan. When he first was looking into to it was originally going to be \$30,000. He has found a solution for about \$600 per year instead of the \$30,000.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OF STARKE COUNTY

Cindy from the Community Services of Starke County came before the Starke County Council to provide an update. She stated that their 45th Anniversary is April 11th and they will be having an open house on the 11th at both sites. She stated on the 23rd of April they will be having a birthday bash. Cindy advised that from July 19th to December 31st she has been able to get grants and do fundraiser. She has brought in \$49,000 over that 5 month period. She mentioned some of the other accomplishments during that time period. She has also been able to restructure the employees creating 2 new positions and giving 3 raises and still coming in under budget of \$26,000. At Christmas time last year each employee received a \$750 bonus. She said they are facing the same issues as the EMS Department with trying to get vehicles. However, they were able to get a donation from the VFW and they were able to get a \$45,000 van. She advised that one thing she has discovered is that the Northern part of the county is a food desert. She stated she has spoken to the Northern Indiana Community Foundation and through a donor advisor they are looking to create a food pantry in Hamlet.

SALARY ORDINANCE UPDATE

Auditor Oesterreich advised Coroner Rosa had put in a raise for his deputies from \$75 a call to \$85 a call during last year's budget workshops but she did not reflect that change in the 2022 salary ordinance. Commissioner Binkley made a motion to approve the updated 2022 salary ordinance as presented. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business or public comment to come before the Starke County Council, Councilman White made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 PM. Councilwoman Gudeman seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

**MARCH 21, 2022
STARKE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Dave Pearman, President

Absent
Brad Hazelton, Vice-President

Kay Gudeman

Don White

Howard Bailey

Don Binkley

Absent
Todd Leinbach

Rachel Oesterreich, Starke County Auditor and
Secretary to the Starke County Council